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a high rank must also be assigned to his historical and critical writings. His "Tales of a Grandfather" show at once his large acquaintance with the history of Scotland and England, and his rare skill in reproducing a lifelike picture of the men and events of a former generation. They belong, indeed, to the least brilliant period of his literary career, — to those busy years when he was struggling manfully with adverse fortune, and laboring with sleepless activity to throw off the heavy load of debt by which he was borne down ; but they have few or no marks of powers overtaken, or of a disappointed ambition. In a simple and luminous narrative, always picturesque and often eloquent, the great novelist retraced for a beloved grandson, one of Lockhart's children, the history of Scotland, from its remote beginning among half-barbarous tribes down to the final overthrow of the Stuarts by the suppression of the rebellion of 1745, and in more than one sense the task seems to have been a labor of love. In respect to some points, his views are open to criticism, and his political prejudices are not always under sufficient control ; but in the main his task was performed in a very satisfactory manner, and as a condensed summary of Scotch history the "Tales" may be read with profit, not only by the class of persons to whom they are specially addressed, but also by persons of mature years. No better or more beautiful edition of them has been published than that now before us. On the completion of these volumes Sir Walter wrote two volumes illustrative of the History of France, which we presume will be reprinted hereafter.

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13. — *The Armies of Europe: comprising Descriptions in Detail of the Military Systems of England, France, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Sardinia, adapting their Advantages to all Arms of the United States Service: and embodying the Report of Observations in Europe during the Crimean War, as Military Commissioner from the United States Government, in 1855 – 56.* By GEO. B. McCLELLAN, Major-General U. S. Army. Originally published under the Direction of the War Department, by Order of Congress. Illustrated with several hundred Engravings. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1861. 8vo. pp. 499.

IN 1855 – 56, General McClellan served as a junior member of the military commission sent from the United States for observation of the course of the Crimean war, and for the procuring of such information as might be embodied in the better organization of our own military forces. The contents of the volume now in our hands first appeared,

as we learn, in an official report, published, or rather not in any suitable form or available sense published, as a government document. The author was then known among those of his own profession as a young officer of brilliant promise; but his name had not become the property of the nation. With the prestige of his present position, he can, of course, command a much larger public than before; and his publishers have judged wisely for the country, no less than for their own interest, in presenting this work in a form so beautiful and attractive. It is entirely professional in its character, and we have neither the space nor the ability to enter into its details; but we can judge of its thoroughness, of its scientific precision, and of its adaptation to practical use. There is manifestly no department of service, equipment, administration, or duty, which the author did not comprehend in his survey, and none which has not passed under the test of his own skilled eye and careful judgment. In fine, this publication cannot but answer, at the present juncture, two equally important purposes, that of furnishing a manual of instruction for officers of the higher grades, and that of conciliating more fully the confidence of enlightened and cultivated men in the commander on whom, under Providence, our national future so essentially depends.

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14.—*The Constitution of the United States. For the Use of Schools and Academies.* By GEO. S. WILLIAMS, A. M. Cambridge: Welch, Bigelow & Co. 1861. 12mo. pp. 199.

THE apparatus for studying our Constitution has improved more rapidly since the integrity of the Union was threatened than at any preceding period. Nor do we suppose this a fortuitous fact. We doubt not that treachery and revolt have stimulated loyalty; that there is a profounder sense than ever before of the need of elementary political training, and that the demand for text-books in this department is on the increase. The book named above consists chiefly of a catechism of the Constitution. It is especially adapted to the use of common schools, and is well suited to the youngest classes of pupils that can be made the subjects of such instruction. This we regard as the principal ground on which it should secure from a certain class of teachers preference over the several other equally good manuals that have passed under our review. When we say that it is issued from the press to which we are indebted for our quarterly issues, we give ample assurance that in its typographical character it is free from the defects which often annoy us in school-books, is accurately printed, and finished, though in a cheap form, with perfect neatness and good taste.